The decade between 1965 and 1975 was nothing if not volatile. The counterculture had begun and flourished. Seismic events like protests over the Vietnam War, the 1968 Democratic Convention, the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., Kent State, and Woodstock had a big impact on many University of Hartford student leaders. Which led me to wonder...

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

M. Kevin Fahey?

by Paul D. Tieger ’73, ’83

“I went to college in 1965 and never left.... How great is that!”
Ask a dozen students who attended UH in the ’60s whom they remember, and Kevin Fahey’s name is bound to come up. Regardless of whether they knew him as Kevin, “Gomer,” “Gomez,” or “Mez,” his involvement in student activities—including TKE fraternity, the Program Council, student government, Homecoming chair, and first student regent—is legendary. Known for his energy, enthusiasm, and upbeat personality, after 35 years, Kevin hasn’t changed a bit.

PDT: When were you at UH? What was your major?
KF: I was a student from the fall of ’65 through ’69…and graduated with a marketing degree. I started working there the summer of ’69 and stayed till the summer of ’76…11 years altogether.

PDT: Who were some of your biggest influences at UH? Any professors or administrators you remember most?
RF: Will Vance [former English instructor], because he got many of us through; Gene Sweeney [former dean of students and professor of history]; and Jack Addley [former dean of students], because he gave me my start and encouraged me as a student leader. But clearly, it was my out-of-class activities at UH that formed me as the person I am today more than anything else. And I’d have to start with the fraternity. I really can’t stress the impact that had on me. I was a pretty geeky kid coming out of New Britain and became a TKE and ran around with that crowd; and those were the first leadership opportunities I had. Then I went into student government. Became [student government] vice president and then president of the fraternity. When I was VP of the student government, Ben Holden ’71 was the president, Jack Hardy ’70 was editor of the school newspaper, and Mark Persky ’69 was associate editor. So the day they arrested Ben and Jack [for printing an “obscene” political cartoon (see The Observer, Spring 2000)], that left Mark and me in charge…sort of an Alexander Haig thing.

PDT: That was an interesting time to go to UH…lots of different types of people.
KF: Absolutely. In the late ’60s we were called the “Berkeley of the East” in LIFE magazine, and we had the first group of eastern hippies. Jimmy Diamond ’72 came in, and it was a pretty radical element. But at the same time, we had the Greeks, who were the pretty straight laced beer-drinkers, and the hippie pot-smokers. I kind of lived in both worlds. Jack Addley referred to me as a “conservative radical” because I was kind of able to bring both of those areas together.

PDT: As the head of the Program Council, you put on concerts and booked the bands. Who were some of the people you brought to campus and met later on?
KF: The concert scene started in ’68 with Jefferson Airplane. In ’69 I started working at UH advising the Program Council. In 1970 to ’75 we did Ten Years After, with James Taylor as the opening act; we paid him $1,500 for two shows. The Byrds, Chicago, Richie Havens. And Bruce Springsteen, whom we paid $1,250; he opened the show for the Chambers Brothers and Mountain.

Later on at UConn, I got to meet lots of people—Bill Clinton, Jerry Ford, Billy Joel, Spike Lee, Maya Angelou, Oprah Winfrey, Jesse Jackson, G. Gordon Liddy—really dozens.

PDT: You left UH in ’76. What did you do then?
KF: I went to Youngstown State in Ohio as program director, where nobody knew me, to prove to myself if I was any good at what I was doing. It was a great experience. I was asked to apply for a program director job at UConn, took it, and have been there for 22 years. During that time I’ve also picked up the leadership program, supervise the Greek Life program, supervise the community service area. [As senior associate director of campus activities], I coordinate all the major programs that happen on campus—family weekend, Homecoming, Husky WOW…stuff like that.

PDT: So, you’ve been working with college kids for a long time. What’s that been like?
KF: I went to college in 1965 and never left, so since then, until now, I’ve lived my entire life with 18- to 22-year-old kids. How great is that! In a way, you’re doing the same things; but in a way, it’s totally different because the kids are always different. It’s definitely something that’s kept me young. I believe very strongly that when a kid goes to college, he or she learns a lot outside the classroom, and I think I play an important role for them outside the classroom. I’ve worked with some unbelievably fantastic kids.

PDT: Whom did you hang out with most when you were a student?
KF: It was mostly the TKE circle—Ed Pelletier, Kenny Gwozdz ’70, Peter Fritsch ’69, Peter Rex ’70; and then Ben Holden, Jack Hardy, Gayle Kelley ’72, Debbie Joyce ’71, Jane Sullivan, Ed Butler ’71, Chris Lessing,

PDT: Whom do you still see?
KF: Dave Craft ’78 (who vacations at my house every year), Kathy Clarke ’76, Don Nasshorn ’75, Bob Henderson ’77, Debby Rice ’70; and I do UConn basketball games with Fritsch, Rex, and Pelletier.

PDT: Whom would you most like to track down and see whatever happened to them?

continued on page 40
Kevin Fahey
Continued from page 27

KF: There are so many, but of the people I’ve lost contact with, I’d say Clark Penny ‘73, Mark Gantner ‘73, Betsy Biben ‘76, and Frank Mancini ‘70 top the list. How’s that for a concoction?

PDT: I know from personal experience that you lived in some interesting places, including the infamous Garfield Street.

KF: Yes, Garfield Street was legendary. I lived there with John Capurso ’68, Nick Guidice, Frank Mancini; and across the street was Debbie Rice, Tony Onorato, and Laurel Wolf ’70.

PDT: So what are some of your favorite things to do now?

KF: Two things come to mind: I’m a big UConn Husky basketball fan; and a while ago, I put in a nice in-ground pool, with a hot tub, cable TV outside. We call it “Club Mez.” I’ve got an Irish flag outside, and people know that if the flag is flying, it means “come on in!” But then again, the Irish Flag is pretty much always flying!

Little-known facts about M. Kevin Fahey

The M stands for Michael.

Won the TKE–Upsilon Xi football game with a last-minute, legendary (and questionably legal) “Sleeper” play

Has two children: Brendan, 19, and Caitlin, 17

Has been married 23 years to the former Jeanne Barber ’72

Is active in the Connecticut labor movement and is currently president of the professional employees union at UConn

Kevin’s parents’ names are Charlie and Spider (Charlie is his mom, Spider, his dad).

To this day, UH gives out an award named in his honor to the student who has made the most outstanding contribution to Gengras Student Union.

It won’t surprise anyone to learn that Kevin would love hear from you (all of you!). He may be reached at <Kevin.fahey@uconn.edu>.

A message from Paul Tieger:

This is my last scheduled interview with alums from the 1965 to 1975 era. I’ve had a great time tracking down and connecting with old friends, and encourage people I’ve missed to get in touch with me at <paul@personalitytype.com>.

In future issues of The Observer, Julie Jansen ’81 will be reporting on alums who attended UH in the late 70s and early 80s. You can contact her with the names of people you want to find out about at <julie@juliejansen.net>.

Singer Dionne Warwick HARTT ’63, HON. ’86, will be the subject of an upcoming episode of the popular television program “Biography” on the A&E network. The hour-long profile of Warwick is scheduled to premiere on Aug. 14. The program will feature a photo of the University of Hartford campus as it appeared in the early 1960s, when Warwick was a student at The Hartt School.

Joe O
Continued from page 25

If we think Joe’s doctorate is his last academic project, we do not know Joe. Over the years, sometimes as I sat in my office in Hillyer 123, whether at day’s start or end, Joe would suddenly appear. Either thinking we would merely continue a conversation begun some weeks before, or assuming I would instinctively, unprompted by any clues as to what might have preceded or impelled his remarks, understand, Joe would return, somewhere in mid-sentence or mid-word, to that earlier dialogue. In a few seconds it would become clear that he had some notion, or scheme for an improvement somewhere. Often, it was part of a plan to improve himself. When it was not, it was an idea to improve the University. Often, his ideas suddenly appeared as facts.

Education for him, it seems, is a matter of degree. Completing his undergraduate degree was a step toward an MA. That would be the step—musical and otherwise—toward the doctorate now awarded him. Something—it might be Joe himself—tells me, there will be another degree. And what is the root of degree? It is the Latin for step!

The Soviet Union is history. Joe’s questioning qualities, however, remain. That is all to the good.

Many thanks for asking me to write about Joe. And many thanks to Joe for giving me so much to write about.

Peter K. Breit is professor emeritus of politics and government.